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USIB-D-15, 2/4
30 October 1958

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

Post-Mortem on ONIE 100-2-58:

Development of Nuclear Capabilities by Fourth Countries:

Likelihood and Consequences

dated 1 July 1958

1. On 28 October 1958 the Intelligence Board noted the attached findings and approved the action set forth in Section II.
2. The USIB agencies are therefore requested to take appropriate steps to comply.

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Executive Secretary

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Post-Mortem on NIE 100-2-58:

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I. Findings

1. NIE 100-2-58 was the second National Estimate on this subject, and reflected a generally broader treatment of the subject, particularly in the examination of possible delivery systems and in the more detailed consideration of various possible combinations of European countries in the nuclear weapons field.

2. With respect to nuclear weapons development and production, there was considerable information, from which it was possible to reach fairly firm conclusions as to the extent of nuclear programs now in existence, and, in broad general terms, the present state of intentions of fourth countries. However, in many respects the available information did not permit confident judgments of the timing and extent of future programs, to the degree that we believe information could be obtained with a higher priority effort.

in our judgment, it should be possible to increase the scale of appropriate operations to obtain fuller and more accurate information, and we believe that such information will become increasingly important if, as we estimate in the paper,

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With respect to countries other than those noted, we believe additional efforts are less warranted, * [redacted] (for example) should stress the systematic collation of available information.

3. With respect to aircraft delivery systems, we encountered no real deficiencies, but believe that careful and continuing attention to the weight-carrying capacity of various aircraft types will be needed to judge whether such aircraft are capable of handling various nuclear weapons as and when these may be developed.

4. With respect to missile delivery systems, diligent research by the Guided Missile Intelligence Committee, on a one-shot basis, produced a remarkably full contribution that represented a major advance over the treatment of this matter in last year's estimate. For purposes of future work, we believe that GMIC should have some sort of working group in a position to assemble the necessary material on short notice, for contribution to future NIE's (expected to be done at least annually) and for interim assessments if required. Such a group should also give continuing attention to the adequacy of requirements and priorities in this field, so that any needed changes may be recommended to the USIB for action. To make the burden of this effort reasonable in relation to GMIC's continued primary concern with Soviet Bloc matters, we believe that such a group should consider only those countries, or combinations, with a present or fairly imminent nuclear capability as estimated in NIE 100-2-58.

5. With respect to the political factors in the possible decisions of fourth countries to initiate nuclear weapons programs, we believe that the field reporting could be more full than it now is, and could take greater account of underlying forces, often not openly expressed, that may influence the making and shape of such decision. We recognize that such reporting is difficult, but believe it will be of increasing importance.

* This sentence does not apply to Communist China. Intelligence on Communist Chinese initiation of nuclear weapons programs (or the transfer of nuclear weapons from the USSR to Communist China) falls clearly within the Second Priority Objectives under the Priority National Intelligence Objectives (DCID No. 1/3, subparagraph II, 1 and m), and has an important bearing on overall Communist Chinese strategy and intentions, a First Priority Objective. It should be handled accordingly.

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II. Action

With respect to paragraph 3 above, we believe that collecting agencies, notably the Air Force, should simply note the character of these future requirements and seek to deal with them within existing priorities.

With respect to paragraph 2 above, we recommend that JAEIC be instructed to review the problem with appropriate collection agencies, in particular the AEC and the Department of State, with a view to stepping up operations within existing priorities, [REDACTED]

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With respect to paragraph 4 above, we recommend that GMIC be instructed to take continuing responsibility for evaluation in this field on the lines indicated.

With respect to paragraph 5 above, we recommend that the USIB agencies note this paragraph and take appropriate action within their normal responsibilities.

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